by Dylan Horrocks

Pickle

No 8

FOR MATURE READERS

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Pickle

Nº 8, JANUARY 1996

by **Dylan Horrocks**
editor **Dolan Hicks (Mrs.)**
publisher **Michel Vrána**

Publication Design and Cover Colours by **Dylan Horrocks and Michel Vrána**

Erratum:
The back cover to *Pickle* #7 showed the cover from Lou Goldman's *Lady Night* No. 5, 1955

"Good is better than evil because it's nicer."
—Milton Caniff

This issue is dedicated to Lars Cawley.

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LETTER FROM HICKSVILLE

As always, it seems like only yesterday that I was sitting down with a pot of Chamomile Tea and a slice of Pawpaw Cheesecake to introduce the last issue of *Pickle*. But since then, Louis has learnt to crawl and even to walk (so long as he has something to lean on).

It's been so long since we printed any letters that my desk here in the Hicksville Press office is absolutely groaning under the weight of a year's mail. So I apologise to everyone we've had to leave out —it certainly doesn't mean we love you any less! And an especially big thank you to everyone who've sent us gifts: Bernard Caleo's wonderful package of tea, CD (I've passed this on to Debs, who's been playing it in her shop) and comics, Seth's marvellous assortment of books and articles on Jimmy Swinnerton etc., and the many many people who have sent their own comics. I've been fretting over the fact that we simply don't have the space to tell you about all these splendid comics we've received; there are simply too many, and this issue's 'Hicksville Hit Parade' is already entirely devoted to New Zealand comics.

Unfortunately, Barney and Abraham are still no closer to settling their differences, and so no new installment of 'Café Underground' this time. But there is the conclusion to Sam's *Stars* and some more *Hicksville*. For those of you who would like to see more of what Dylan is up to in between *Pickles*, he is now contributing a comic strip 'Milo's Week' to the *NZ Listener* [*Publisher's Note: 'Milo's Week' can also be found on the world wide web at: http://www.blackeye.com*] and also has a regular column in Jeff Levine's *Destroy All Comics* magazine (published by Slave Labor), starting with issue 4.

As always, I do hope you'll enjoy this *Pickle*. Until next time, I remain fondly yours,

Dolan Hicks

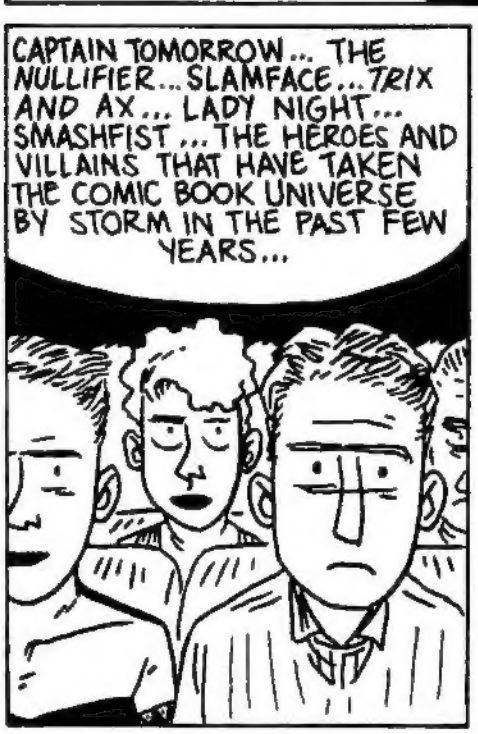
Dolan Hicks (Mrs.)
c/o Pickle, P.O. Box 5512, Wellesley St., Auckland, New Zealand

The Story So Far:

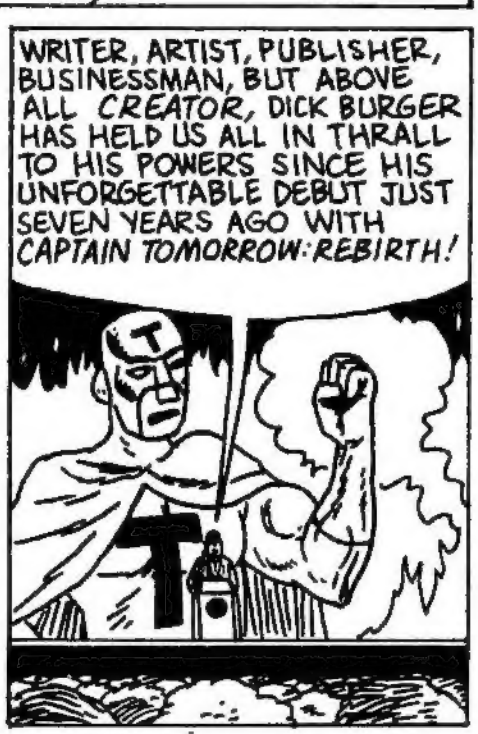
HICKSVILLE | Leonard Batts, a comics journalist from *Comics World* magazine in America, is writing a book about world-famous comics creator Dick Burger, who rocketed to success with his first *Captain Tomorrow* graphic novel several years ago. Curious about Burger's early years, Leonard has travelled to Burger's home town: Hicksville, New Zealand, a remote settlement on the East Cape. However, upon arriving, Leonard finds that no-one in Hicksville is willing to talk about Burger, with the exceptions of Mrs. Hicks and Sam Zabel. Over a cup of tea at the Rarebit Fiend Tea Rooms, Sam offers to show Leonard an autobiographical strip he has done about his friendship with Burger, called "Stars".

STARS | At the movies one night, Sam meets a young student named Sally and they go out for coffee. Later, back at home, Sam gets a phone call from Dick Burger (calling from his private jet), inviting Sam to a party in an exclusive Auckland hotel. Two days later, Sam is staying at Burger's mansion in Los Angeles, signed up to pencil the comic book *Lady Night* for Burger's Eternal Comics for $350 a page, and hanging out with movie-star Cincinnati Walker (who plays Lady Night in the upcoming Hollywood blockbuster). But there is a catch. Burger is due to be admitted to the Comic Book Hall of Fame in a special ceremony, and he wants Sam to give a nostalgic speech about their childhood together. But Sam writes his own version, which tells the truth about Burger and what he did back in Hicksville, years ago...

STARS
Part 4
T
eternal COMICS


CAPTAIN TOMORROW... THE NULLIFIER... SLAMFACE... TRIX AND AX... LADY NIGHT... SMASHFIST... THE HEROES AND VILLAINS THAT HAVE TAKEN THE COMIC BOOK UNIVERSE BY STORM IN THE PAST FEW YEARS...

AND ALL OWE THEIR SUCCESS TO ONE MERE MORTAL... ...DICK BURGER!! THIS IS THE MAN WE ARE HERE TO HONOUR TONIGHT.


WRITER, ARTIST, PUBLISHER, BUSINESSMAN, BUT ABOVE ALL CREATOR, DICK BURGER HAS HELD US ALL IN THRALL TO HIS POWERS SINCE HIS UNFORGETTABLE DEBUT JUST SEVEN YEARS AGO WITH CAPTAIN TOMORROW: REBIRTH!
T

...DICK'S THE BEST! HE'S A GREAT GUY! IF I'D HAD A GUY LIKE *HIM* IN THE *BULLPEN* THIRTY YEARS AGO, JUST THINK WHERE WE'D BE TODAY! OF COURSE I DID HAVE A GUY LIKE DICK BACK THEN... AND HIS NAME WAS JACK KIRBY!!

I USED TO THINK NO-ONE COULD EVER REACH JACK'S LEVEL OF GENIUS, BUT THAT WAS BEFORE DICK CAME ALONG. *DICK*-YOU ARE THE GREATEST GUY I'VE EVER KNOWN... AND, DICK, DON'T FORGET TO SPELL MY NAME RIGHT ON THE CHECK!

HAHAHAHAHA

EVER SINCE THE LAUNCH OF *CAPTAIN TOMORROW: REBIRTH*, DICK BURGER HAS BEEN *THE* CREATIVE FORCE IN COMICS. MORE RECENTLY HE WENT ON TO BECOME THE MOST IMPORTANT FIGURE IN THE *BUSINESS* OF COMICS AS WELL.

IT IS MY BELIEF THAT DICK WILL LEAD US INTO THE NEXT CENTURY AND BEYOND - INTO A NEW AND UNPRECEDENTED ERA IN COMIC BOOK HISTORY, IN TERMS OF POPULARITY, FINANCIAL GROWTH AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, CREATIVE SUCCESS NEVER DREAMED OF...

WITH THE RELEASE OF THE FORTHCOMING *LADY NIGHT* MOTION PICTURE, I AM SURE DICK BURGER WILL USHER IN A NEW GOLDEN AGE FOR AMERICAN COMIC ART.

AND OUR NEXT SPEAKER IS NONE OTHER THAN THE CREATOR OF THE GOLDEN AGE LADY NIGHT HIMSELF... *LOU GOLDMAN!!*

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

!

AHHEM... THE FIRST TIME I SAW DICK BURGER WAS UP AT THE ETERNAL OFFICES. I WAS DROPPING IN A JOB AND THERE WAS DICK, KIDDING AROUND WITH ED TOGLIANI, ACTING OUT A CAPTAIN TOMORROW FIGHT SCENE. AND I THOUGHT TO MYSELF: WHO *IS* THIS IDIOT?

YOU'RE NEXT, MR. ZABEL.

HA HAHAHAHA HA

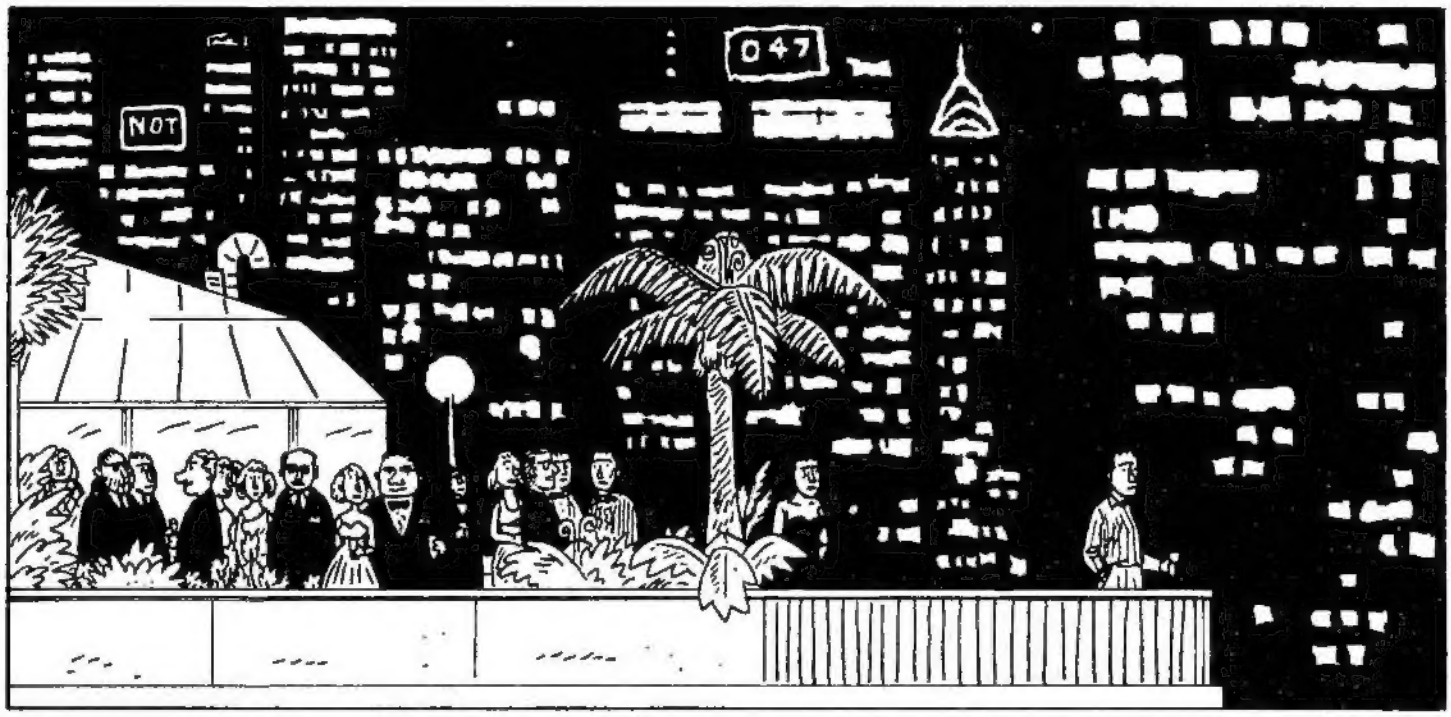
SO NOW I KNOW.

HAHAHAHA HAHA

CONGRATULATIONS DICK...

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

UM
Ahem
...
CONGRATULATIONS, DICK...
AND NOW, PRESENTING THE MAN HIMSELF...
...DICK BURGER!!
CLAP CLAP CLAP
ARRR
HOORAY
EEEEE

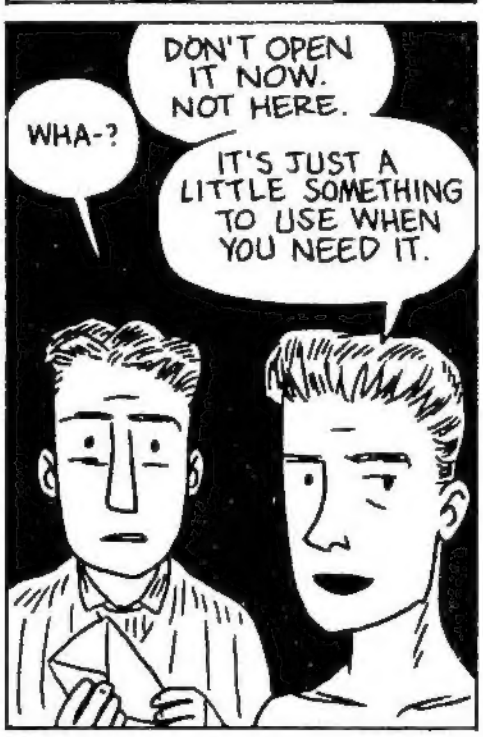

NOT
047

SO WHICH SPEECH WAS THAT?
...

NEW YORK'S KINDA PRETTY AT NIGHT, HUH?
HM...

HOME-SICK?
I GUESS. AUCKLAND'S NOT MUCH OF A CITY, BUT SOMETIMES I THINK THAT'S WHY I LIKE IT.

I THINK I'M OUT OF MY LEAGUE.
...
I GOT YOU A PRESENT.

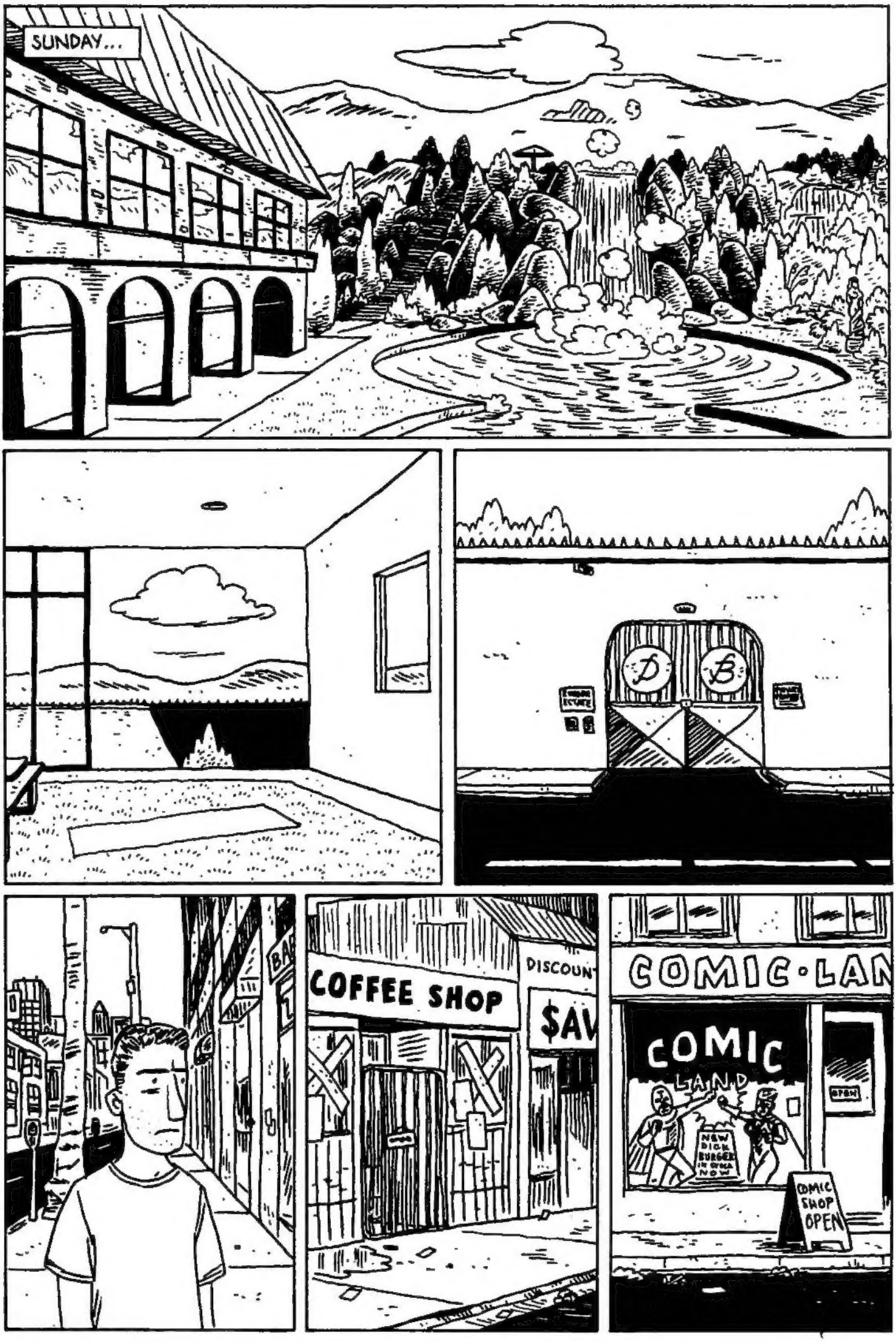

WHA-?
DON'T OPEN IT NOW. NOT HERE.
IT'S JUST A LITTLE SOMETHING TO USE WHEN YOU NEED IT.

ANYWAY, CATCH YA LATER. I GOTTA GO SCHMOOZE.

MR. GOLDMAN?
WHO ARE YOU?
er- MY NAME'S SAM ZABEL. I'M FROM HICKSVILLE.
HICKSVILLE, EH? NO SHIT... YEAH, I'VE HEARD OF HICKSVILLE ...
I KNEW YOU WOULD HAVE.
OLD MORT MOLSON USED TO TALK ABOUT HICKSVILLE- SAID HE'D BEEN THERE A COUPLE A TIMES, BUT YOU KNOW I ALWAYS FIGURED IT WAS LIKE A METAPHOR...
I CAN ASSURE YOU IT'S QUITE REAL, MR. GOLDMAN.
WELL WHADDAYA KNOW? HICKSVILLE, EH? MAN, THAT'S REALLY SOMETHING...
ARE YOU A CARTOONIST THEN, SAM?
OH WELL, I DUNNO... DICK HAD HIRED ME TO PENCIL LADY NIGHT, BUT AFTER TONIGHT I GUESS I'M PROBABLY UNEMPLOYED AGAIN. ANYWAY, NO-ONE COULD EVER DO LADY NIGHT LIKE YOU DID, SIR.
THAT'S KIND OF YOU, SON, BUT I DOUBT MOST OF THE KIDS TODAY SEE IT THAT WAY.
I DON'T THINK THAT'S NECESSARILY TRUE, SIR. I MEAN MAYBE IT COULDN'T LOOK THE SAME NOW, BUT IF THE STORIES YOU WROTE AND THE CARE YOU TOOK WITH THE DRAWING- I BELIEVE THEY WOULD BE A REVELATION TO MOST KIDS TODAY.
I WISH THAT WERE TRUE, SAM. BUT I'M JUST AN OLD MAN- I DON'T UNDERSTAND THESE VIDEO GAMES AND SPLATTER MOVIES AND SO ON. I ALWAYS TRIED TO WRITE ABOUT GOOD AND EVIL AND HOW EASILY WE BECOME EVIL. THESE DAYS I LOOK AT THE COMICS AND I CAN'T TELL WHO IS THE GOOD GUY. EVERYBODY'S EVIL TODAY.
LOU.
SAM.
...
HI DICK.

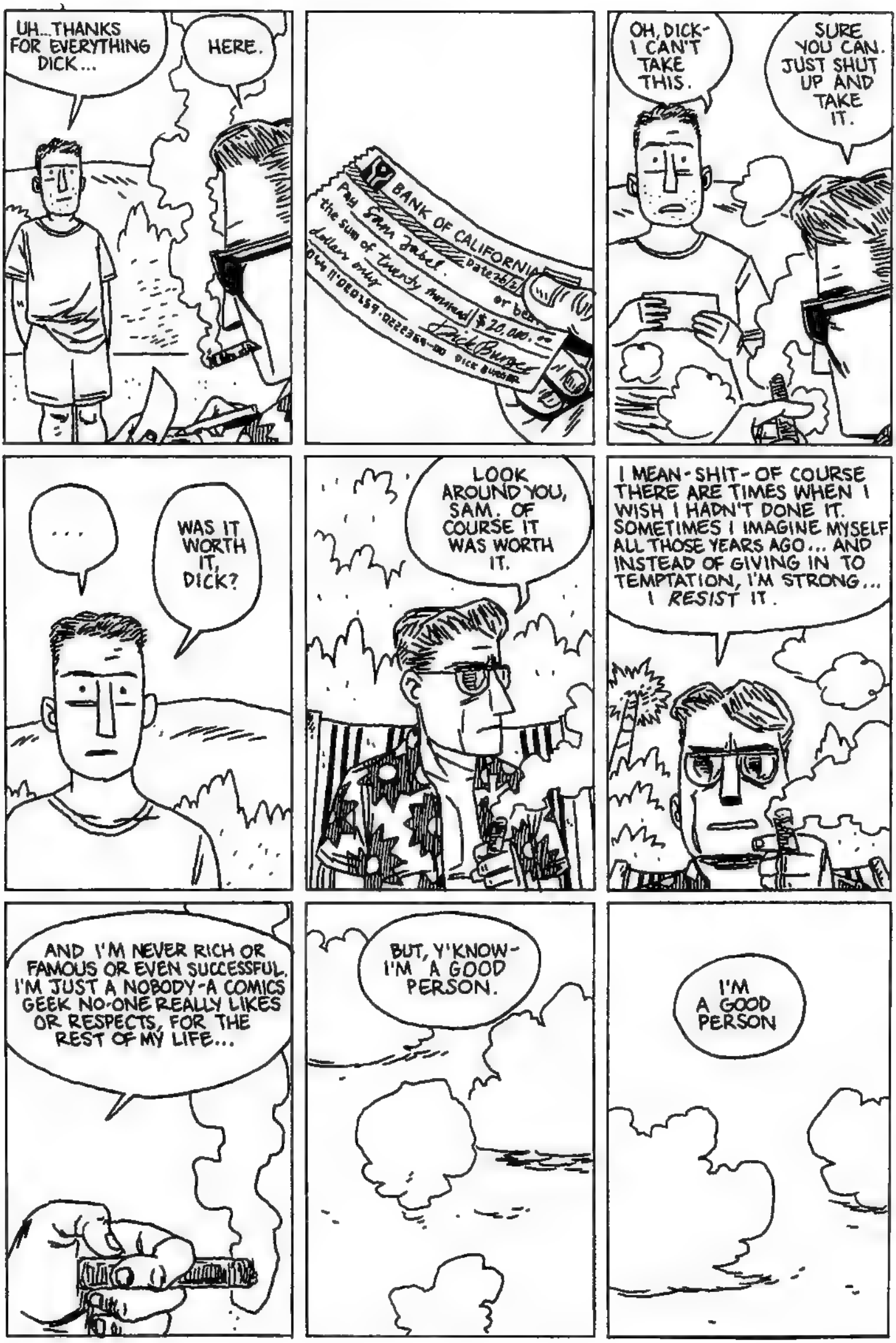
I JUST WANTED TO SAY THANKS, LOU. IT WAS AN HONOUR HAVING YOU HERE TONIGHT.
OH, IT WAS NOTHING, DICK.
HERE'S THAT CONTRACT WE DISCUSSED... SIGNED AND SEALED. GLAD TO HAVE YOU BACK ON BOARD.
...
THANK YOU DICK.
WELL, I'D BETTER GET BACK TO THE ACTION!
SURE.
MR. GOLDMAN- I WANTED TO GIVE YOU THIS...
IT-WELL-IT'S THE SPEECH I SHOULD HAVE READ TONIGHT, IF I'D HAD THE COURAGE.
HERE. I KNOW ALL THIS...
YOU DO?! BUT-
MORT AND I WOULD TALK OVER EVERY-THING. I'M JUST GRATEFUL HE NEVER LIVED TO SEE THIS.
THEN -
I'VE BEEN IN THIS BUSINESS A LONG TIME AND I KNOW A CREEP WHEN I SEE ONE. BUT BURGER OWNS ME. JUST LIKE MARTIN GOODMAN AND STAN LEE AND JULIUS SCHWARTZ BEFORE HIM. THE ONE THING I'VE LEARNT IN THIS LIFE IS TO PUT UP WITH A LOT OF BULLSHIT.
I'M SORRY SIR.

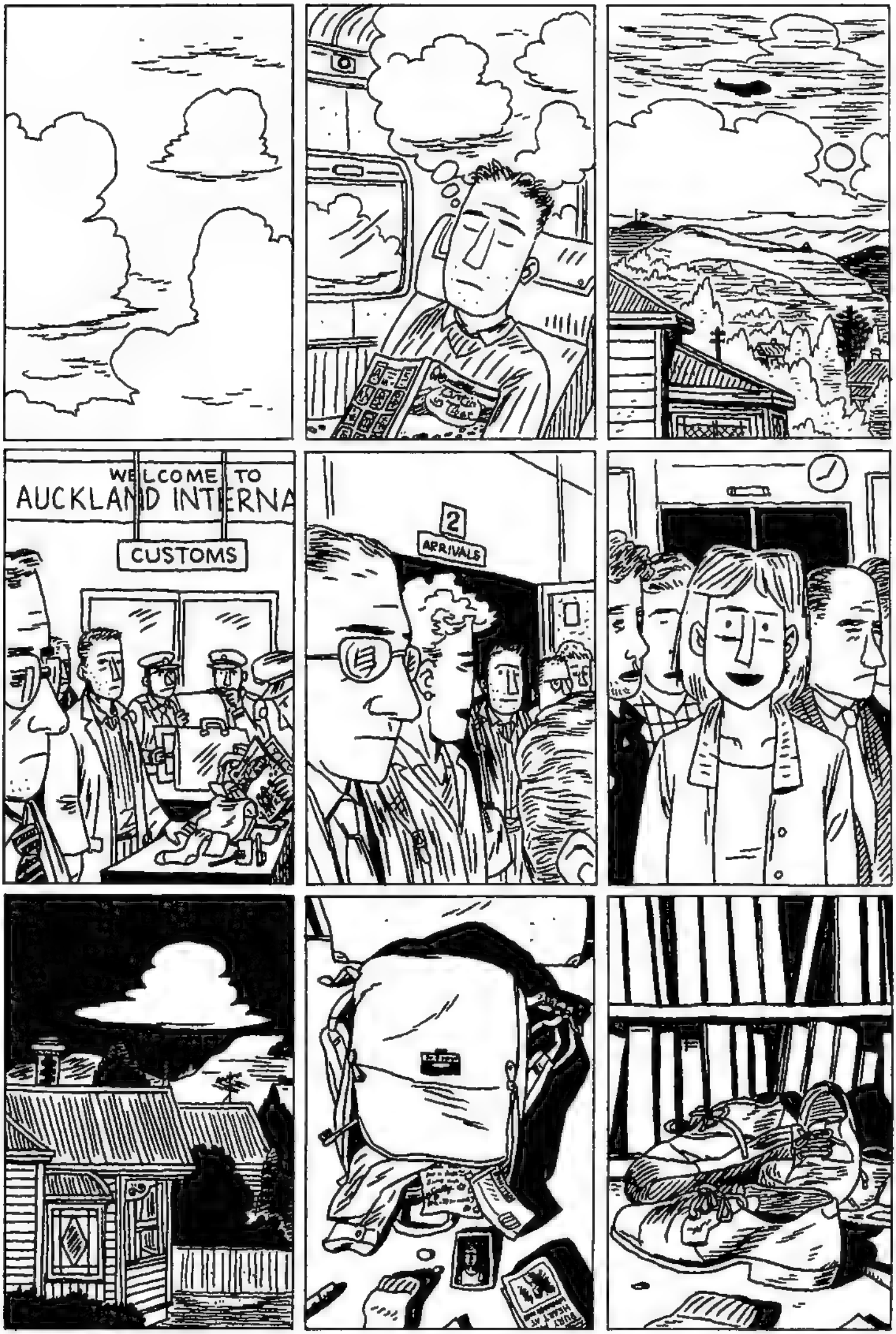
LOOK, SON, DON'T SWEAT IT OVER LADY *NIGHT*. ALL THE BEST CARTOONISTS THESE DAYS ARE ON WELFARE.
THANK YOU, SIR.
HEY- CALL ME LOU. YOU'RE MAKING ME FEEL A MILLION YEARS OLD HERE.
CINCINATTI? OH NO, SHE'S - WELL - SHE'S A GOOD FRIEND.
THAT YOUR GIRL, SAM?
HMM. SHE REMINDS ME OF MY FIRST WIFE, GOD REST HER SOUL. SHE WAS A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN... CARRIED HERSELF *SO*... KNOW WHAT SHE SAID TO ME THE NIGHT I PROPOSED?
"YOU'VE MADE THE STARS SHINE."
THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN DESERVING LOVE. WHEN SOMEONE CAN SEE THE GOOD IN YOU, THAT'S THE BEST THING THERE IS.
OF COURSE, FIVE YEARS LATER SHE LEFT ME FOR A SHOE SALESMAN, SO GO FIGURE...
UNITED AIRLINES
PASSENGER TICKET
ONE WAY LOS ANGELES TO AUCKLAND, NZ.
VALID ANY AVAILABLE FLIGHT BEFORE
JANUARY 1, 1996. FIRST CLASS (C/A. C. WALKER)

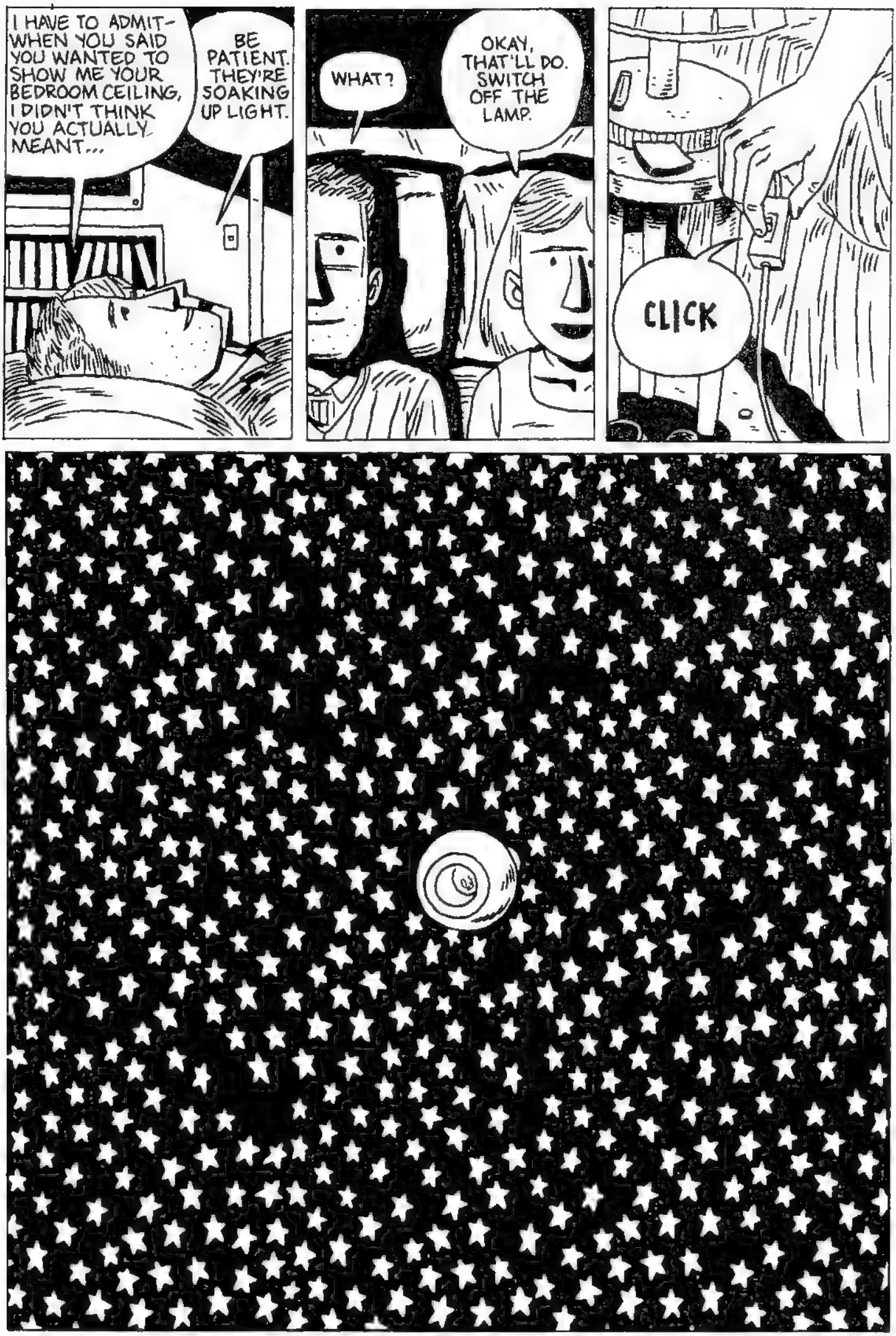

SUNDAY...
COFFEE SHOP
DISCOUN
$AV
COMIC·LAN
COMIC
LAND
OPEN
COMIC SHOP OPEN

SLAM FACE
DEATH
BABES
TOMORROW
LADY NIGHT
SLAM FACE
MASS KILLER
DEATH SQUAD
LADY NIGHT
WITH THE POWER OF THE ORB I AM INVINCIBLE!
YOU MAY THINK YOU'RE PRETTY TOUGH PUNK...
BUT YOU'RE MEAT NOW, SUCKER!!

BURGER-WALLACE
coffee the other night & I can't stop thinking of you. I hope you want to get together again soon- for a date?!
HELLO?
HI- SALLY? IT'S SAM.
YEAH, YEAH, I'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE...
HOLD ON A MINUTE, TODD...
I GUESS I'D BETTER BE GOING...


UH...THANKS FOR EVERYTHING DICK...
HERE.
BANK OF CALIFORNIA
Pay Sam Jabel
the sum of twenty thousand
dollars only
$20,000.00
Dick Burger
OH, DICK- I CAN'T TAKE THIS.
SURE YOU CAN. JUST SHUT UP AND TAKE IT.
...
WAS IT WORTH IT, DICK?
LOOK AROUND YOU, SAM. OF COURSE IT WAS WORTH IT.
I MEAN- SHIT- OF COURSE THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I WISH I HADN'T DONE IT. SOMETIMES I IMAGINE MYSELF ALL THOSE YEARS AGO... AND INSTEAD OF GIVING IN TO TEMPTATION, I'M STRONG... I RESIST IT.
AND I'M NEVER RICH OR FAMOUS OR EVEN SUCCESSFUL. I'M JUST A NOBODY- A COMICS GEEK NO-ONE REALLY LIKES OR RESPECTS, FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE...
BUT, Y'KNOW- I'M A GOOD PERSON.
I'M A GOOD PERSON


WELCOME TO
AUCKLAND INTERNA
CUSTOMS
2
ARRIVALS


I HAVE TO ADMIT- WHEN YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO SHOW ME YOUR BEDROOM CEILING, I DIDN'T THINK YOU ACTUALLY MEANT...
BE PATIENT. THEY'RE SOAKING UP LIGHT.
WHAT?
OKAY, THAT'LL DO. SWITCH OFF THE LAMP.
CLICK
—Sam Zabel.

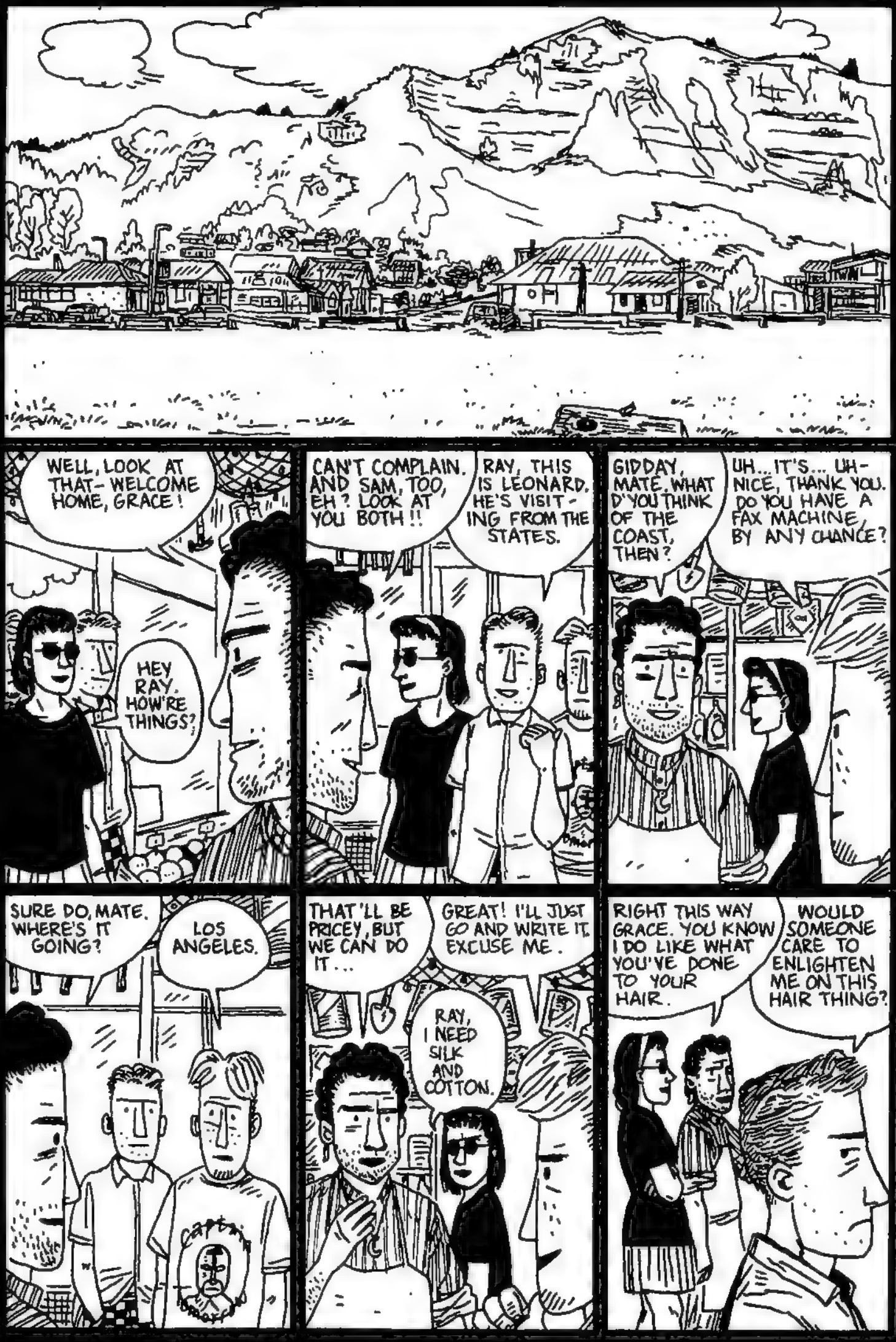
Hicksville
GOOD MORNING!
er- HI.
DARJEELING, THANKS, DANTON. AND SCRAMBLED EGGS. HAVE YOU ORDERED YET, LEONARD?
YES- ABOUT HALF AN HOUR AGO.
...
SO. YOU'VE FINISHED READING IT?
YEAH-THANKS. I HAVE ONE OR TWO QUESTIONS, THOUGH.

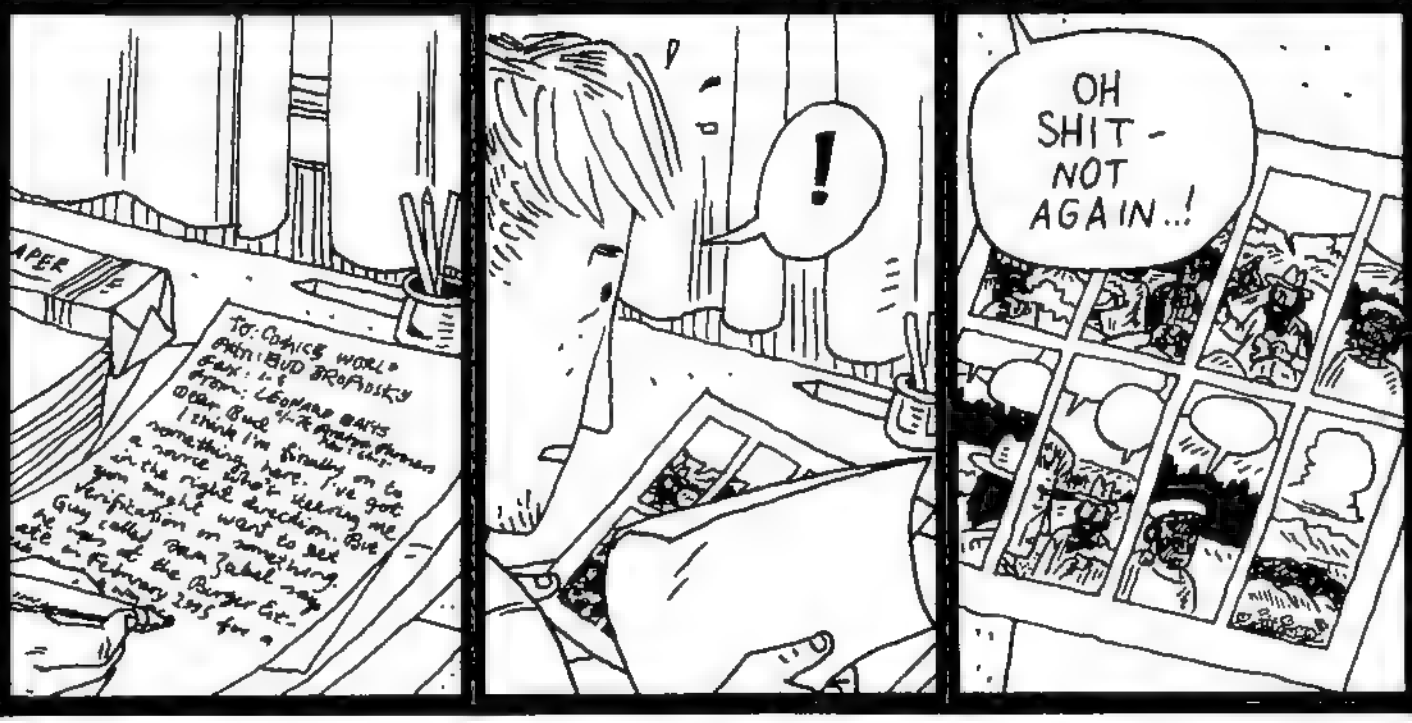
THOUGHT YOU MIGHT.
DID THIS REALLY HAPPEN?
CROSS MY HEART. ALL OF IT. WELL... THE MOXIE & TOXIE STUFF IS -
NO, I MEAN THE THING WITH DICK BURGER, AND CINCINNATI WALKER...
ABSOLUTELY. ON OATH. WE STILL SWOP POST-CARDS - CINCINNATI, I MEAN.
JEEZ...Y'KNOW, I WAS AT THAT PRIZE-GIVING. I REMEMBER YOU NOW - AT THE TIME I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS STAGE-FRIGHT, BUT...
MY BIG QUESTION IS THIS: WHAT DID DICK DO ALL THOSE YEARS AGO?
WELL... HMM...
SAM.
TA.
OH MAN, DANTON'S SCRAMBLED EGGS ARE JUST THE BEST! I MISS 'EM THE WHOLE TIME I'M AWAY!
SIP.
AS FOR YOUR QUESTION-
!
SPLeURG! THIS ISN'T COFFEE - IT'S TEA!!
YOU ORDERED COFFEE? DANTON DOESN'T DO COFFEE!
FER CHRISTS SAKE! WHAT IS IT WITH THIS FUCKIN' BACK-WATER?! I'M IN WITHDRAWAL HERE!!
Heh.
SORRY, I... YOU WERE ABOUT TO SAY..?

WELL, NOTHING REALLY. IT'S NOT FOR ME TO TELL YOU WHAT DICK DID. ONLY KUPE CAN DO THAT.
KUPE? WHO'S KUPE?
KUPE LIVES IN THE LIGHTHOUSE UP ON THE POINT. HE'S- ...WELL, HE COULD TELL YOU ABOUT DICK. BUT NO-ONE ELSE WILL. IT'D BE LIKE TELLING SOMEONE ELSE'S SECRET.
=SIGH= BUT WHATEVER IT WAS, IT WAS BAD?
VERY BAD. THE WORST. YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
IS THAT WHY NO-ONE HERE WILL TALK TO ME? BECAUSE OF WHAT DICK DID?
BASICALLY. IT'D PROBABLY HELP IF YOU DIDN'T WEAR THAT T-SHIRT, TOO. AND THEN THERE'S THE COFFEE THING...
I THOUGHT MAYBE NO-ONE LIKED AMERICANS.
ON THE CONTRARY, PLENTY OF AMERICANS HAVE VISITED HICKSVILLE. SOME OF THEM END UP STAYING FOR QUITE A WHILE.
SO HOW DO I GET TO THIS LIGHTHOUSE?
AH-WELL, IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE, I'M AFRAID.
I KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO SAY THAT.
I MEAN, GETTING THERE IS EASY, BUT GETTING KUPE TO TALK TO YOU... WELL, HE'S KIND OF A RECLUSE. HASN'T OPENED THE DOOR IN TWO YEARS, BY ALL ACCOUNTS, EVER SINCE-
HEY, SAM-
GRACE! HAVE YOU TWO BEEN INTRODUCED?
...
WELL, UH ...
LEONARD BATTS, GRACE PEKAPEKA etc etc
IS DANTON AROUND?
HELLO AGAIN.

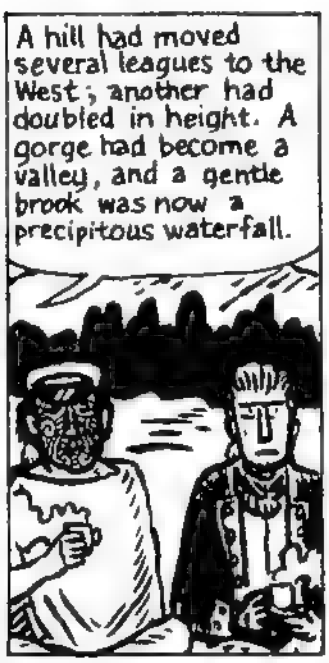
OF COURSE DANTON'S AROUND. HE'S INSIDE.
COME ON. LET'S GO.
HEY! I'M STILL EATING BREAK-FAST!
sigh! WHERE ARE WE GOING?
TE ARAROA. SUPPLIES.
ET- COULD I MAYBE TAG ALONG? I'D LIKE TO TRY SEND-ING A FAX.
SURE, WHY NOT? IT'S A NICE DRIVE
OW!
I TOLD DANTON WHAT YOU SAID.
MG
DK 1011

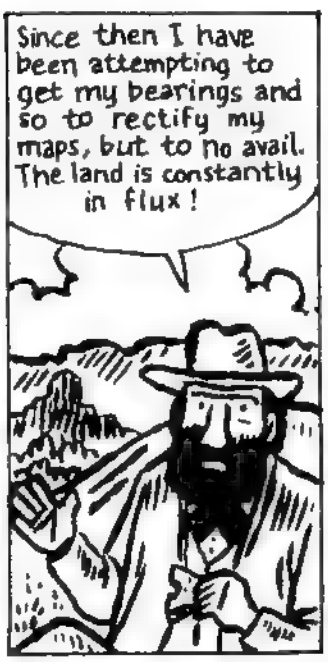
GREAT.
HE DROPPED ANOTHER TEA POT.
FINE. HE'S GOT PLENTY.
...
SO...WHAT ARE WE DOING IN TE ARAROA?
I NEED SOME STUFF FOR MY COSTUME. SO DO YOU.
NONSENSE. I'VE ALREADY GOT MINE.
YOU ARE *NOT* WEARING THAT FUCKING *ROBIN* OUTFIT AGAIN! YOU'RE PROBABLY TOO FAT FOR IT NOW, ANYWAY.
HMPH.
SO WHAT ARE *YOU* GONNA WEAR?
STATE SECRET.
HOW ABOUT FANBOY HERE?
er- I'M SORRY?
SATURDAY. THE ANNUAL HOGAN'S ALLEY PARTY. GOTTA HAVE A COSTUME!
OH, I DOUBT I --
I'M SURE MRS. HICKS CAN FIX YOU UP WITH SOMETHING. SHOULD BE QUITE A PARTY--ESPECIALLY IF THE WEATHER HOLDS.
IT WILL.


WELL, LOOK AT THAT- WELCOME HOME, GRACE!
HEY RAY. HOW'RE THINGS?
CAN'T COMPLAIN. AND SAM, TOO, EH? LOOK AT YOU BOTH!!
RAY, THIS IS LEONARD. HE'S VISIT-ING FROM THE STATES.
GIDDAY, MATE. WHAT D'YOU THINK OF THE COAST, THEN?
UH... IT'S... UH- NICE, THANK YOU. DO YOU HAVE A FAX MACHINE, BY ANY CHANCE?
SURE DO, MATE. WHERE'S IT GOING?
LOS ANGELES.
THAT'LL BE PRICEY, BUT WE CAN DO IT...
GREAT! I'LL JUST GO AND WRITE IT. EXCUSE ME.
RAY, I NEED SILK AND COTTON.
RIGHT THIS WAY GRACE. YOU KNOW I DO LIKE WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO YOUR HAIR.
WOULD SOMEONE CARE TO ENLIGHTEN ME ON THIS HAIR THING?


!
OH SHIT - NOT AGAIN..!

I had been charting this region for four months, when two weeks ago, a strange phenomenon occured. I awoke one morning to find the landscape around me had inexplicably changed.


A hill had moved several leagues to the West; another had doubled in height. A gorge had become a valley, and a gentle brook was now a precipitous waterfall.


Since then I have been attempting to get my bearings and so to rectify my maps, but to no avail. The land is constantly in flux!

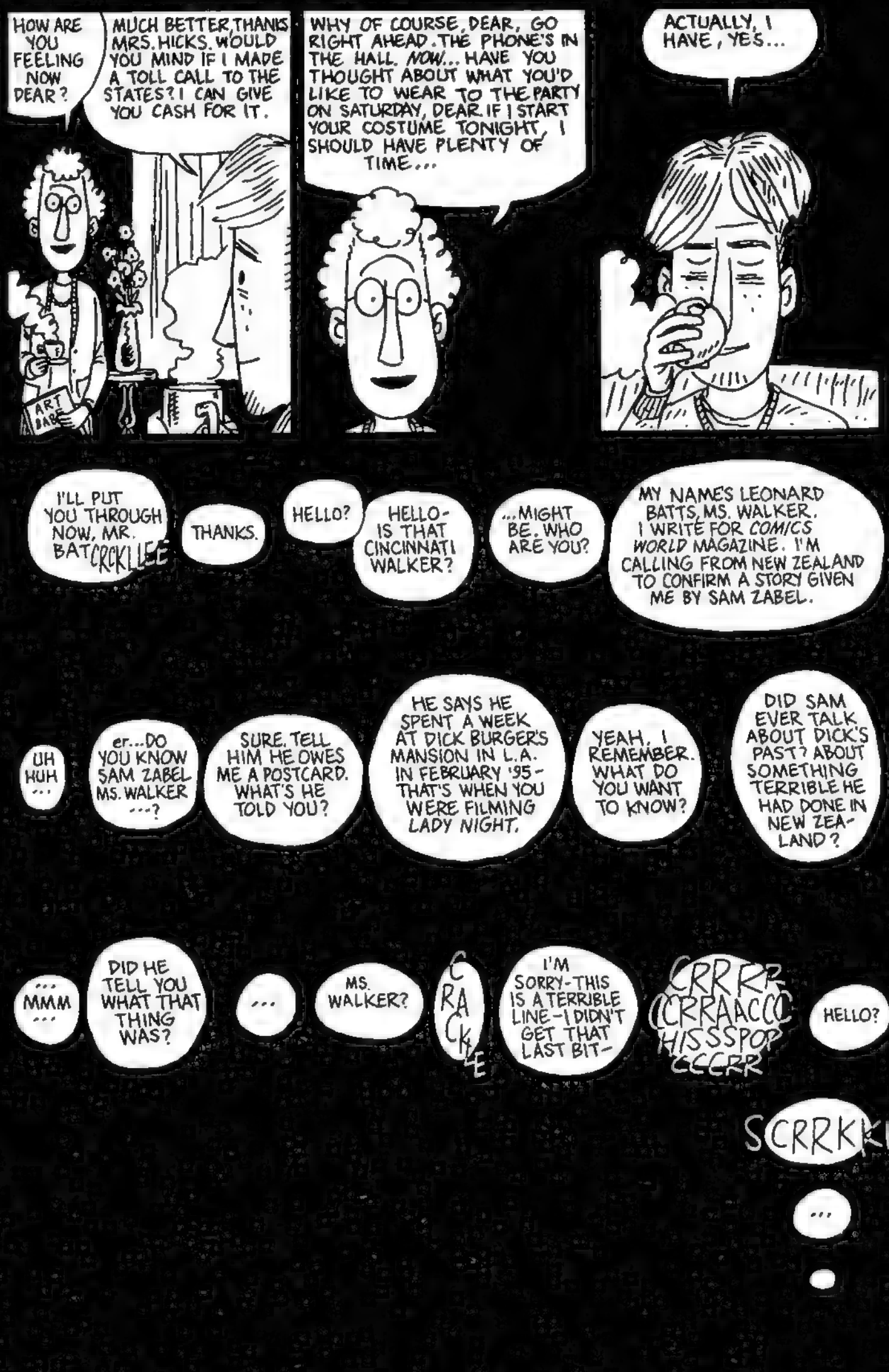
The land has never been still like a corpse. How do you map a man's life? The earth is playing a joke on you...

Then we must find another way to determine our location.
But how, when there are no fixed landmarks against which to measure?

Simple. By using the stars and the compass. It is called *navigation*, sir.
But that is a mariner's art, good Captain, and as you can plainly tell, we are not at sea!

Hush. Did you hear that?

...
SO WHAT DID DANTON SAY?
I'M NOT QUITE SURE, BUT IT SOUNDED SOMETHING LIKE: "GLUERGKL".
DO EITHER OF YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS..?
NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.
NOPE.
HM.
WELL... HERE'S THE FAX. ...THANKS.
AND,..DO YOU SELL COFFEE?
INSTANT OR FANCY?
ANY-THING.
THERE Y'GO MATE.


HOW ARE YOU FEELING NOW DEAR?
MUCH BETTER, THANKS MRS. HICKS. WOULD YOU MIND IF I MADE A TOLL CALL TO THE STATES? I CAN GIVE YOU CASH FOR IT.
ART BABE
WHY OF COURSE, DEAR, GO RIGHT AHEAD. THE PHONE'S IN THE HALL. NOW... HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO WEAR TO THE PARTY ON SATURDAY, DEAR. IF I START YOUR COSTUME TONIGHT, I SHOULD HAVE PLENTY OF TIME...
ACTUALLY, I HAVE, YES...
I'LL PUT YOU THROUGH NOW, MR. BAT
CRCKLLEE
THANKS.
HELLO?
HELLO- IS THAT CINCINNATI WALKER?
...MIGHT BE. WHO ARE YOU?
MY NAME'S LEONARD BATTS, MS. WALKER. I WRITE FOR COMICS WORLD MAGAZINE. I'M CALLING FROM NEW ZEALAND TO CONFIRM A STORY GIVEN ME BY SAM ZABEL.
UH HUH ...
er...DO YOU KNOW SAM ZABEL MS. WALKER ...?
SURE. TELL HIM HE OWES ME A POSTCARD. WHAT'S HE TOLD YOU?
HE SAYS HE SPENT A WEEK AT DICK BURGER'S MANSION IN L.A. IN FEBRUARY '95 - THAT'S WHEN YOU WERE FILMING LADY NIGHT.
YEAH, I REMEMBER. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?
DID SAM EVER TALK ABOUT DICK'S PAST? ABOUT SOMETHING TERRIBLE HE HAD DONE IN NEW ZEALAND?
... MMM ...
DID HE TELL YOU WHAT THAT THING WAS?
...
MS. WALKER?
CRACKLE
I'M SORRY - THIS IS A TERRIBLE LINE - I DIDN'T GET THAT LAST BIT-
CRRRR CCRRAACCC HISSSPOP CCCRR
HELLO?
SCRRKKK
...

KNOCK
TO BE CONTINUED...

DEAR MRS. HICKS,

c/o Pickle, P.O. Box 5512, Wellesley St.,
Auckland, New Zealand

What wonderful news! Our love to you both and to your little 'bubba'. Our new 'addition' is pestering me as I write —she's 7 going on 8 this month. Her name is Bella and I bought her on my birthday last October from Battersea Dogs' Home. No, she's not a dog, but a *very* affectionate, talkative tabby cat. She's so friendly and trusting—a bit of a softy, actually!...

In January I supervised the Trust relocating to smaller, but more central premises near Farringdon in the city. The current exhibition ties into all the VE Day anniversary and includes 2 of the only surviving originals of Norman Pett's 'Jane' newspaper strip. Apparently his neighbour and solicitor disapproved of his nudie photos and comics and on Pett's death burnt the lot! Makes me mad! We've also borrowed originals by Bernard Graddon, a brilliant strip artist who wrote and drew 'Just Jake', initially a British answer to 'Li'l Abner'. It's manic stuff and almost entirely unprinted... In other news, we saw Ed [Pinsent] acting in Alan Bennett's comedy 'Habeas Corpus' —he really was good. His 'Windy Wilberforce—Scroll Saga' has been published as an 80-page paperback —inspired stuff. He and Harley are taping their improvised music —I hope to join in someday soon...

I just picked up Pickle #7 and thoroughly enjoyed it. I'm sure your San Diego trip must have given you some insights into mainstream comics wheeler-dealing. I appreciated the longer episode this time round and that lovely off-register back cover.

Paul Gravett
National Museum of Cartoon Art
Baird House
15-17 St. Cross St
London EC1N 8UN
England

Hugs and kisses to Bella from all of us in Hicksville! I hope all of our English readers have visited the Museum —it really has some wonderful shows. Ed Pinsent's Windy Wilberforce *book* The Saga of the Scroll (ISBN *1899866000), is available from Slab-O-Concrete, P.O. Box 148, Hove, E. Sussex, BN33DQ, ENGLAND for £3.00 plus 15% for postage, or from P.O. Box 821388-162, Dallax, TX 75382 for US $4.80. Ed Pinsent is "the Philip Larkin of cartooning" (or so Harry the postie calls him) —certainly one of England's best— and* Windy Wilber-force *is beautiful, haunting and whimsical.*

I love *Pickle*! You draw so amazingly well and everything is beautiful. Each issue makes me anxious to see the next! Yesterday, my friend had a baby and I got to see a newborn for the first time in my life. 4 1/2 hours old! A little boy named Conner. It's so neat to be *hours* old rather than *years* old —neat! The hospital room had this feeling of 'unreality', I think because the baby was in it.

Jennifer Daydreamer
P.O. Box 85265
Seattle, WA
USA

Jennifer's own comic, Jennifer Daydreamer *is indeed very beautiful. It's up to $6 and is US $1.*

Pickle makes my faith in comics even stronger. Dylan, you are a modern master. I've been telling everyone about *Pickle* and I'm not even on the Black Eye payroll. I've enclosed the latest issue of my comic, just so I can tell people that, "yeah, even people in New Zealand read my comic."

Joe Chiappetta
2209 Northgate,
N. Riverside, IL 60546
USA

For those of you who don't know, Joe's comic is Silly Daddy, *and it's really quite splendid. You can order $8 from him for $3 (it also has a lovely strip by John Porcellino) and also his book* The Long Goodbye *($7.95), which collects issues 1-7. And* everyone *in Hicksville is reading it!*

One of the things that struck a chord with me was the very "kiwi" feel of *Pickle*. I can't really define it except to say that it's a feeling of calm, solitude, of distance. But beneath this seeming serenity, a sense of tension; that nagging voice at the back of your mind: "You think you've got it sussed don't you. You think we're clean and green. Kiwis are peaceful, and easygoing. Isn't that right, Mate? Well think again boyo!" Or maybe it's just me suffering from too little sleep.

Soon A. Lee (Yes, that's my real name and people do call me Soon, now, later,... never mind).
Auckland, NZ

Dylan says that if you want to get a glimpse behind that clean, green NZ image, read Ian Wishart's The Paradise Conspiracy *(Howling at the Moon Press), a disturbing account of some of the nasty goings on around the Winebox scandal and more.*

Enjoyed the allusions to Billy Bragg and *Tintin*. I am convinced the male population of the world should and could be divided into those who read *Tintin* as children and those unfortunate souls who did not.

Steve Saville
Auckland, NZ

And further divided into those who still read Tintin *regularly, and those unfortunate souls who do not.*

THE HICKSVILLE HIT PARADE

Well, it's about time we did a special New Zealand Hit Parade, and it just so happens that a lot of what's read in Hicksville at the moment is local produce!

Unfortunately, there's so much around, that we'll just have to stretch this over two issues. First up, we'll list some of the anthology comics around.

If you want to order anything listed here, just send your order to Mrs. Hicks at P.O. Box 5512, Wellesley Street, Auckland, New Zealand, and she'll pass it on to the relevant people. All prices are in NZ$ (which is usually worth around US$0.60). Please add US$1.50 postage for up to 5 comics, or US$2.50 for more than 5.

The scene here in Aotearoa is so busy these days that we can't even begin to list everything. If you want to know more, however, ***Black River Chronicle***, a fanzine edited by **Dylan with Lars Cawley** (#1 available for $2), **Canterbury University Comics Soc's *FunTime Comics*** (edited by **Darren Schroeder**, #1-8 at $2 each) or the Comics Soc's ***NZ Comics Directory*** ($1) should keep you relatively up to date until **Tim Bollinger** finishes his history of NZ comics (working title: ***Back of Beyond***), due some time in 1996/7.

A public art gallery in Auckland (the **Fisher Gallery**, Pakuranga) is holding **Comix** —an exhibition of contemporary NZ comics— from January 12 to February 13, 1996. The catalogue, including a huge jam strip by 30 or 40 NZ cartoonists, is currently being prepared by **Lars Cawley**. If you're interested, it will be around $4.

Cornelius Stone, the co-creator of the notorious ***Knuckles the Malevolent Nun*** (2 issues published by Fantagraphics a few years ago; also available in Cornelius' ***Knuckles is Selling Out***, $5; and ***Razor #11 - the Collected Knuckles***, $5) has also been editing comics anthologies since 1985. ***Razor*** (#5-9 at $3 each), ***Family of Sex*** (#2-5 at $3 each) and the most recent ***UFO*** (1 issue so far, $5) give a pretty good survey of NZ cartooning. All are big (A4, anything up to 80 pages) and eclectic, ranging from work by *Deadline* and *Zoot* artist Roger Langridge to such highlights as Ian Curtis's death certificate. Work by Dylan Horrocks (under the pen-name **Kupe**) appears in most issues of ***Razor*** (with long stories in #'s 2, 5, 9 and a lengthy interview (c.1988) in #7) and in ***UFO***.

Strips used to be NZ's main comics anthology. Started in 1977 by Colin Wilson (now drawing ***Young Lieutenant Blueberry*** in France) and others, it lasted 10 years and set a high standard of slick and significant comics, with equal doses of American, English and French influence. One of their best contributors, **Barry Linton** (who's been called NZ's Robert Crumb), still has a few back issues for sale: #'s 17, 19-21 at $5 each. Barry has also collected most of his work into ***Chok! Chok!***, but has very few copies left, at $10 each. It's a hefty volume, though, and well worth it.

Underground music fans may be familiar with **Chris Knox** of Tall Dwarfs fame. But did you know he is also a cartoonist, with a weekly strip in an Auckland newspaper? For a time, he even published an anthology comic, ***Jesus on a Stick*** (#1 is $4; #2-3 are $4.50 ea; #4 is $5), which reads very much like one of his albums —loose, wild and frequently sublime.

Daughters of Slaughter ($5) and ***Strip Club*** ($4) are both anthologies of NZ women cartoonists, the former from Auckland and the latter published in Wellington (NZ's smaller capital city).

Pistake (8 issues at $2 each) is also from Wellington, and includes **Dave Tulloch** and **Simon Morse**'s *Straitjacket Ninja* (soon to be published in USA by Kitchen Sink).

Mainstream (#1 at $5) is an anthology of comics from a more, well, mainstream sensibility, by students and graduates of Auckland's AIT Graphic Design Course (edited by **Paul Rogers**).

There are others (most notably Dunedin's ***Treacle*** and Hamilton's ***Oats***), but hopefully that will give you enough to get started. Next issue, some of Aotearoa's many solo comics.

—David Hough
our NZ comics correspondent

GLOSSARY

AOTEAROA: a Maori name for New Zealand, 'Land of the long white cloud'.

AUCKLAND: largest city in New Zealand (population c. 1 million), dominated by its harbour and a series of extinct volcanic cones. Also called 'Tamaki Makaurau' — 'Land of a thousand lovers'.

MAORI: the indigenous people (or 'Tangata Whenua' — 'people of the land') of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

PAKEHA: a Maori term for european settlers in Aotearoa/New Zealand (origin obscure).

TE ARAROA: "the Long Path", a town on the East Cape (near Hicks Bay), nestled between Whetumatarau mountain and the long sweeping beach of Kawakawa Bay.

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